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WASHINGTON TIMES
11 September 1985

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Spilling the KGB beans

On April 5, 1983, French President Francois Mitterrand's Socialist government expelled 47 Soviet "diplomats." Their recall to Moscow at the time was a sensational Page 1 story in a world afflicted by Soviet KGB espionage and subversion. But, it turns out, the expulsion was only half the story.

What has recently come to light, thanks to the leading French daily, *Le Monde*, was the inside reason for the expulsion of these Soviet agents: documentation of KGB and GRU (the Soviet military espionage agency) activities in France. The documentation came from the KGB itself.

Credit for this intelligence coup goes to the DST (*Direction Surveillance du Territoire*), or the National Surveillance Commission, France's little-publicized counterintelligence agency.

The KGB documentation prepared in 1980 and later uncovered by the DST was so overwhelming that Yuri V. Andropov, then Soviet Communist Party boss, took the expulsion of his spies with unwonted meekness. He did not, in keeping with the Soviet retaliatory practice, demand recall of French diplomats from Moscow. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* in April 1983, Mr. Andropov said, "I do not want French Socialists and much less French Communists, to be blamed for this gross provocation against the Soviets. . . . We have not retaliated because we are guided by the larger interests of Soviet-French relations, which we value very much."

Now what had the French DST uncovered that made Mr. Andropov, the Marxist-Leninist fire-eater, speak so sweetly?

The DST had uncovered operations of the *Voenno-Promyshlennaya Kommissia*, Russian for "War Industrial Commission," a little-known Soviet agency that each year notifies and

assigns Soviet intelligence agencies their larcenous missions against the Western world of advanced research and development. The VPK is under the direction of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers which deals with military industry. Head of VPK is Leonid Smirnov, a vice president of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, equivalent to a deputy prime minister.

The articles in *Le Monde* last spring also cited a pseudonymous article in the magazine *Defense Nationale* by a French counterespionage official who revealed that nine Soviet war industry and three civilian sector ministries each year prepare a shopping list of what technical or scientific information will be needed in the coming year.

VPK examines these lists. It then assigns specific missions to the Soviet intelligence collectors. Overseas espionage agents in the KGB, GRU, and embassy-consular personnel work on the VPK agenda.

While the VPK, formally, meets but once a year, it functions all year alongside a technical center, called VIMI, a Russian acronym for State Institute for Interbranch Information, headed by one Valentin Erine. VIMI helps choose intelligence objectives and then funnels information filched from the West to the appropriate Soviet ministries.

In a sense, the entire operation is like that of criminal rings which specialize in the theft of fancy limousines and steal to order; off the streets of New York, cars which are

then shipped to Latin-American destinations.

Behind the VPK-VIMI combination and their dozen ministries are two other services, special technical units managed by the KGB. The job of these various organizations is to make frequent surveys seeking to uncover technological deficiencies in Soviet war and war-related industries which could be remedied by Western science and technology.

A list of what's needed is then submitted to VPK and VIMI. Together, they establish intelligence targets which are then assigned to five so-called "purchasing departments." VIMI is charged with distributing to the Soviet ministries the intelligence gathered by the five "purchasing departments." In 1979-80, according to Soviet documents in the hands of the French counterintelligence agency, VPK-VIMI drew up 244 priority targets.

According to Soviet statistics, Western technology secrets obtained by Soviet espionage came overwhelmingly from the United States, 61.5 percent; from West Germany, 10.5 percent; France, 8 percent; Britain, 7.5 percent; and Japan, 3 percent.

Financial savings arising from this superbly organized and centralized Soviet espionage subsystem are large.

According to the Soviet documents, the savings achieved by this wholesale stealing of Western research and development secrets increased from 210 million rubles in 1976 (about \$282 million) to 407 million rubles in 1980 (about \$617 million).

The Soviet report demonstrates just how the information-consumers, specifically the Aeronautics Industry Ministry, dealt with the filched Western R&D secrets. In 1979, says the report, this ministry studied 156 samples and 3,896 technical documents "with special information furnished by the purchasing departments." Then follows this breakdown:

Deemed useful by the ministry: 87 samples and 346 technical documents, all of which "were put to practical use in the research and development of new weapons systems using new military hardware, and also of existing weapons being perfected," in the words of the Soviet document. The Soviet ministry report adds that in 1978, a year earlier, 64 samples and 316 documents proved useful.

Used to analyze and estimate scientific and technical level of contemporary weapons and military hardware: 24 samples and 2,307 technical documents. "In addition, as part of the exchanges carried out among the different industrial branches of this ministry, 987 technical documents were received and studied, and 850 of these documents proved to be useful to this branch of the industry."

Value to the aeronautics industry: "The use of positive foreign experience has allowed our country to reach a higher technical level in less time. The use of this experience also led to the industrial use of some progressive technological operations."

Savings: "This ministry estimates that the use of foreign technical knowhow in various research and

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pilot studies saved us 48.6 million rubles [about \$74 million] or 18.8 million more than in 1978."

Then follows a classification of samples and documents, about 30 percent of which deal with "aerodynamics," "stability," and "aeroelasticity," and 22 percent with "surface materials." Thanks to these R&D thefts, the "positive (Western) technical progress [has been incorporated into] new orientations and new technical processes for the creation of aeronautical materials."

The report gives two examples of such incorporation by the Soukhoi and Mikoyan factories. The first concerns innovations for "the maintenance of a modern fighter" which were used in two Soviet planes, Su-27 and MiG-29 — "fast numerical computers," "air signals system," "principle of autonomous separation of [fuel] tanks," the "multiplexing methods for the exchange of data

among the subsystems," the "interconnection of different commands in a single command module," and "devices to stabilize metal weapons" which make it possible "to regulate firing time."

The second example used by Soukhoi deals with a report obtained by Soviet espionage which dealt with wind-tunnel tests of airplane wings. The technical data was used in developing a wing with a "notched leading edge" for SU-25 fighters. The Soviet report said the first example produced savings of 8 million rubles and the second, savings of 2 million rubles because they "shortened the evaluation period and eliminated the need to conduct wind-tunnel tests."

Overall, there was still another advantage of this wholesale (*tous azimuts*) stealing of Western R&D secrets — by knowing the extent of Western military technology advances, Soviet military industries can determine which of their projects should be dumped and what new scientific research programs should be approved.

One last note: Of the 47 Soviet spies expelled from France, seven were involved with UNESCO, either as employees of the international organization or as so-called advisers to the Soviet Mission to UNESCO. The U.S. government has withdrawn from that U.N. agency in protest against pro-Soviet and anti-U.S. policies of UNESCO's Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow. One of the Soviet expellees was Sergei Krioutchkov, member of the UNESCO delegation. He is the son of Gen. Krioutchkov, who runs KGB espionage divisions in charge of scientific intelligence.